



All-Party **Oireachtas Group**  
on **Dementia**

## **The All-Party Oireachtas Group on Dementia 2020 Budget Proposal** **September 2019**

Since early 2016 a diverse group of TDs and Senators have been actively working together to enhance the lives of people with dementia and their carers. Members have heard first hand from people with dementia and family carers and we have heard evidence from leading academics, frontline workers, the National Dementia Office, Department of Health officials and others. All of this has helped to inform and shape our third Budget Submission.

The All-Party Oireachtas Group on Dementia recognise that there is a pressing and pertinent need to mainstream funding for dementia services, and that such funding should be incrementally increased year-on-year. The urgency of this need has been highlighted in the report *Mid-Term Review of the Implementation of the National Dementia Strategy*<sup>1</sup>, which emphasises the need for a dedicated budget for dementia service development.

We are advising the Government that the following should be prioritised in the 2020 budget:

1. €7.415m to address the community service gap
2. €1.68 for Dementia Advisers: Incremental increase from 9 to 33 posts by 2023
3. €1m for Regional Centres of Excellence for people with Down syndrome and dementia
4. €6m for dementia home care, moving towards €24m by 2023

There are currently 55,000 people with dementia in Ireland. This is expected to rise dramatically to 68,216 by 2021 and 132,828 by 2041<sup>2</sup>. Now is the time to begin investing in services and technology that will support people living with dementia and their carers and save money in the long run. These services and supports should be made available to all people with dementia including the 4,000 people under 65.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Irish National Dementia Strategy (2014) The Department of Health, Dublin

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

## **1. €7.415m to Invest in Community Service Gap**

A recent 2018 report entitled, *Dementia Specific Services in the Community: Mapping Public and Voluntary Services*<sup>3</sup>, collaboratively developed by the HSE and The Alzheimer Society of Ireland, identifies gaps in existing dementia service provision. This Mapping report indicates significant geographical inequity across all counties in terms of availability of dementia services.

The All-Party Oireachtas Group on Dementia is of the view that there should be parity of access to dementia services in all counties. Geographical equity and consistency in service provision needs to be addressed so that people with dementia and their carers can unequivocally access person-centred dementia care services, including Alzheimer cafes, Dementia Adviser services, support groups, social clubs, family carer programmes, counselling services and cognitive therapy programmes.

**The All-Party Oireachtas Group on Dementia proposes investment of €7.415m to start to bridge the acute discrepancy between existing available services and services required in order to achieve geographical equity and ensure a minimum standard dementia care is available for all. This investment should be made over a three year time frame.**

## **2. €1.68m for Dementia Advisers: Post Diagnostic Supports**

On our study trip to Scotland in 2017 we saw first-hand people's entitlement to and the positive impact of a Dementia Adviser network. Dementia Advisers signpost people to services and provide much needed support, training and information to families and communities. Currently there are 9 Dementia Advisers nationwide. The Department of Health has confirmed that funding for the current 9 posts is secure and will continue.

**The All-Party Oireachtas Group on Dementia is calling for a commitment to incrementally increase the number of Dementia Advisers from 9 to 33 in Budget 2020 at a total cost of €1.68m or €70,000 per post. This would mean an additional 8 Dementia Advisers over a three year period in order to meet local need. This investment would mean that families in every county in Ireland have access to a Dementia Adviser.**

**Note: The cost of €70,000 includes salary and associated costs, employer costs and expenses including travel expenses and is in line with current post costs.**

## **3. €1m for Regional Centres of Excellence for people with Down syndrome and Dementia**

People with Down syndrome are at a much higher risk of developing dementia and an estimated 700 people with dementia and Down syndrome live at home with ageing parents. Professor Mary McCarron who presented to our group in 2017 estimated that 88% of people with Down syndrome will develop dementia compared to 7% of the general population. At the moment Ireland is not prepared for the challenge this poses. The National Dementia Strategy recognised that there is a need for special consideration for people with Down syndrome due to the increased risk, and that targeted screening for this population would be useful.

**The All-Party Oireachtas Group on Dementia recommends that funding of €1m should be provided to begin establishing Regional Centres of Excellence with trained and experienced staff to**

---

<sup>3</sup> Department of Health (2018) *Dementia Specific Services in the Community: Mapping Public and Voluntary Services*.

complete assessments and to offer advice and support to people with Down syndrome living with dementia and their family members, as well as providing supports to allied healthcare professionals and medical professionals working in the area.

*Note:* In July 2018 it was announced that funding from Dormant Accounts Fund would be allocated to operate a central coordinating national memory clinic, based in a Dublin teaching hospital, with several satellite clinics distributed nationally. However, additional funding will be required to develop and continue this service.

#### **4. €6m for Dementia Home Care: Progressive increase towards €24m by 2023**

The Department of Health acknowledges that home care supports can be a preferred and cost-effective alternative to long-term residential care for some older people. The majority of people with dementia want to live at home, in a familiar environment linked to their communities<sup>4</sup>. Limited funding and access has been provided under the National Dementia Strategy for Intensive Home Care Packages for people with dementia. An additional €6m must be invested in dementia home care in Budget 2020, moving towards €24m by mid-2023.

This funding must be dedicated and there must be equality of access, with Intensive Home Care Packages being made available to people with dementia under the age of 65. To ensure equality of access, the HSE should be required to report on a quarterly basis the number of people under the age of 65 who are in receipt of an Intensive Home Care Package.

**The All-Party Oireachtas Group on Dementia proposes an additional investment of €6m in Budget 2020 to enable the HSE to expand the number of Intensive Home Care Packages. This increased funding should be matched in Budget 2021, Budget 2022 and Budget 2023 to reach at least €24m for dementia home care.**

---

<sup>4</sup>Meeting Older People's Preference for Care: Policy, But What About Practice?, (2016) IASW, Age Action, ASI and UCD